

Beaumont Hospitals®

June 28, 2011

Dear House Health Policy Committee Member:

On behalf of Beaumont Health System, I am writing to indicate our support for House Bill 4756, sponsored by Representative Mike Callton, to license genetic counselors.

In 2000, Michigan was a national leader in passing informed consent laws for genetic testing. It is now time we join the thirteen other states that have passed legislation to license genetic counselors to assure that the right genetic tests are ordered for patients and, more importantly, to assure that the test results are interpreted correctly so that patients can make informed decisions about their medical care.

At Beaumont, we have a number of genetics programs that work with individuals and families who are faced with making medical decisions for conditions that have a genetic basis. We are fortunate that our genetic counselors have the education, training, and certification to provide the most reliable information to our patients. Unfortunately, we are seeing more patients or families who have been given inaccurate information on the risk of a disease or a recommended treatment by individuals who do not have the same level of education as our genetic counselors. Many of these patients have undergone expensive, unnecessary genetic testing or have experienced unnecessary emotional stress from having received an incorrect interpretation of a genetic test result.

We believe that licensure of genetic counselors will assure that patients receive both accurate genetic tests and accurate interpretation of those tests. This will not only be better patient care, but it likely will save health insurance dollars. As an example, in 2007 the Beaumont Employee Health Plan created a genetic testing policy for hereditary cancer syndrome genetic testing. This policy requires that pre- and post-test genetic counseling by the Hospital's certified genetic counselors be performed prior to any testing being authorized by BEHP. Thus, appropriate utilization of these expensive tests – as well as appropriate future medical treatment – ensured.

We would appreciate your vote in support of House Bill 4756. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Ananias Diokno, M.D.
Executive Vice President
and Chief Medical Officer

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